

Subject-Verb Agreement B

8b. A verb should agree in number with its subject.

(1) Singular subjects take singular verbs.

(2) Plural subjects take plural verbs.

When a sentence contains a verb phrase, the first helping verb in the verb phrase agrees with the subject.

EXAMPLES Our favorite **sport is** soccer. [The singular verb *is* agrees with the singular subject *sport*.]

We have been playing soccer in the park. [The plural helping verb *have* agrees with the plural subject *We*.]

EXERCISE A In each of the following sentences, underline the verb in parentheses that agrees with its subject.

Example 1. Soccer (is, are) the world's most popular team sport.

1. Our cat (*like*, *likes*) to watch television with us, especially the nature shows.
2. All the students (*enjoy*, *enjoys*) the reading assignment every week.
3. Before he became a lawyer, my uncle Nacio (*was*, *were*) a high-wire performer in the circus.
4. This music (*has*, *have*) elements of harmony that are very complex.
5. (*Is*, *Are*) Rafael usually first in line for every new movie in town?
6. As the final plot twist is revealed, the reader (*start*, *starts*) to understand why the butler left the French doors open.
7. My mother (*prefer*, *prefers*) a good book to a good movie.
8. Many passersby (*are*, *is*) curious about the mysterious building being constructed downtown.
9. Before they leave for vacation, the women (*ask*, *asks*) their neighbors to look after their house.
10. The grass (*is*, *are*) always greener after a good rain.

EXERCISE B In each of the following sentences, underline the helping verb in parentheses that agrees with its subject.

Example 1. Jacob (has, *have*) been exploring a salt marsh.

11. Over the past year, Jonelle (*has*, *have*) been collecting articles about Olympic gymnasts.
12. I read that the English actor Ralph Fiennes (*is*, *are*) appearing in *Hamlet* this season in London.
13. (*Do*, *Does*) she know yet about the letter from her brother?
14. They (*has*, *have*) been thinking about adopting a dog for some time now.
15. Certainly Mr. Iwaye (*do*, *does*) understand the importance of meeting the deadline.